(ग) क्या सरकार ने पाकिसतान द्वारा की गई ऐसी कार्यवाहियों के खिलाफ अपना विरोध दर्ज कराया है, यदि हां, तो पाकिस्तान द्वारा उसका क्या उत्तर दिया गया है?

रक्षा मंत्री (श्री मुलायम सिंह यादव): (क) 1997 के दौरान पाकिस्तान सैनिकों द्वारा भारतीय सीमा पार करके गोलीबारी करने की कोई घटना नहीं हुई।

(ख) और (ग) ऊपर (क) के उत्तर को देखते हुए प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Purchase of Aircraft Carrier

41. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are negotiating with some countries for purchase of an aircraft carrier;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the aircraft carrier is likely to be inducted into the Navy?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There is a proposal for purchase of an aircraft carrier as a replacement for INS Vikrant which was decommissioned on 31st January, 1997.

(c) A decision in this regard would depend upon the merit of the proposal availability of funds.

Morality of Defence Personnel

42. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of defence personnel who have lost their lives infighting against insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir and North Eastern regions of the country; and

(b) the steps taken to prevent the high rate of incidence of mortality of defence personnel?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) The number of Army personnel who lost their lives in fighting against insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir and the North Eastern region of the country during the period 1988-1997 (upto 6.11.1997) is 1745 and 352 respectively.

(b) Various steps, such as intensive training to the troops in counter insurgency operations prior to induction, making incoming and outgoing troops to operate together for one month to ensure adequate on the job training, provision of appropriate equipment/weapons to the troops close monitoring of the activities of militants and formulation of adequate response thereto, are being taken.

Defence jobs

43. SHRI SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that now a days Indian Youth is avoiding joining Defence jobs, specially the job of captains;

(b) if so, what action has been taken to solve this crisis;

(c) whether his Ministry has conducted any survey to know the mood of Indian Youth regarding the defence jobs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) to (d) Judging by the number of applicants for vacancies at the induction level, it cannot be said that a career in the Armed Forces is becoming less attractive. On an average about 1.7 lakhs candidates appear in the UPSC examination and the UPSC recommends about 13-14 thousand candidates every year. However, many candidates are rejected at the Services Selection Boards (SSBs) level.

A general slide in employment preference of the youth in favour of softer jobs appears to be the main reason for the shortage of officers in the Army.

Army Headquarters are constantly reviewing this problem and have

rationalised the selection procedure by SSBs where final rejections take place.

An 'Image Projection Campaign' has been launched with the assistance of a professional media agency to highlight the positive and unique aspects of the Army as a career option. The measure has been initiated to plug the existing information gap and make youth aware of the excellent opportunities awaiting them in case they join the Army as an officer.

The Government have since issued orders revising the pay scales and allowances of the Armed Forces Officers and other ranks. Some of the redeeming features are as follows:

(a) The pay scale of Brigadier and equivalent in services has been revised to Rs. 16700-450-18050/- in improvement of the Pay Commission recommended scale of Rs. 15350-450-17600/-.

(b) The rank of 2nd Lt. and equivalent has been abolished and all officers on commissioning are now graduated to the rank of Lt. and equivalent in the starting pay of Rs. 8250/- (Pay scale Rs. 8250-300-10050). this is higher than the starting pay of Rs. 8000/- for a new entrant to Group 'A' service on the civil side.

(c) The stipend granted to Cadet trainees in the Service Academic has been steeply raised to Rs. 8000/- per month from the existing rate of Rs. 1500/- per month.

It is expected that the above measures will go a long way to substantially increase the attractiveness of Armed Forces as a career option.

In view of the above, it is not considered necessary to conduct any such survey at this juncture.

Ban on purchase of guns from Bofors

44. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government (JPC) has placed a ban on the purchase of ammunition from the Bofors company for the 155 mm guns purchased from it; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to indigenise production of ammunition?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Embargo was placed on business dealings with M/s Bofors in December, 1989 by the Government and not by the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The embargo prohibits the purchase of any item from M/s Bofors and is not specific or confined to ammunition.

An Empowered Task Group has been constituted to identify and indigenise as many items as possible.

Self sufficiency in Defence production

45. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised a long-term plan upto 2005 for achieving 70% self-sufficiency in defence production from present level of 40%;

(b) if so, important details of the plan finalised with investment/project profiles and order of investments and phasing thereof;

(c) what were the targets of defence production for the last three years ending upto 31st March, 1997 and achievements reported thereunder;

(d) details of on-going major projects and progress achieved thereof during 1996-97 and investment proposed during 1997-98 on these projects, project-wise; and

(e) details of fresh initiatives taken to avail of latest technologies on long-term basis in defence production through joint production ventures with friendly countries to meet defence requirements?